

**VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Minutes of April 15, 2014**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Chair Dennis Donahue, Village Trustees Kevin T. Beal, K. David Maxwell, and James R. Wilson. Also present were Acting Village Manager Stephen Fitzhugh, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Finance Director Laurie Baroffio, Utility Superintendent Patrick J. DeMasi, Linda Thurston (Northfield Senior Center), John Kiernan (Phelps Engineering), Thomas Nesbitt (Phelps Engineering), Lynn Doney (Town Selectman), Matt Gadbois (Town Selectman), John Quinn III (Town Selectman), and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Chair Donahue called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT (Scheduled and Unscheduled)

- a. Linda Thurston, Northfield Senior Center: Request to Partially Close Wall Street for Community Street Party (Sunday, May 25, 2014).** Ms. Thurston stated that the Senior Center and the Recreation Committee have been working together to host a Community Family Day to be held on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend. The party would last from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and there would be food, drinks, games, etc. The request is to close Wall Street to traffic from the Fire Station to the Wall Street Bridge. Chair Donahue asked if the Northfield Emergency Services and Highway Department had been contacted about this. Ms. Thurston has not done this yet. Chair Donahue would support the request so long as there is no objection from these departments. Motion by Trustee Maxwell, seconded by Trustee Beal, to close Wall Street at the day, time, and location indicated above dependent upon the concurrence of Northfield Emergency Services and the Highway Department. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- b. John Kiernan and Thomas Nesbitt, Phelps Engineering: Approval of Water System Improvements Engineering Services Agreements.** These projects had been discussed at the last meeting (03/25/14) and the Boards had provided their consent for Phelps Engineering moving forward on the engineering phase of this project. Mr. Nesbitt subsequently contacted the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) regarding this and was informed that ANR would prefer that the overall project be split into two (2) separate components: (1) Central Street (and Washington Street) and (2) King Street. Documents were prepared for the two (2) components and copies were distributed to the Board members in their packets. These documents contain the engineering design contracts and loan forms. Since Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi would like project construction on Central Street to begin this fall, a bond vote to authorize borrowing would have to take place by early summer. The bond vote for King Street could take place later in August. Manager Fitzhugh stated that it makes sense to split these projects since the engineering plans for Central Street are well advanced but the King Street project is relatively new. Chair Donahue asked if there could be cost savings if the construction phase of both projects were done together. Mr. Nesbitt said that there were pros and cons to this approach. For example, requesting all work be done simultaneous would limit bids to only those engineering firms that could handle such a large project. Splitting the work would create opportunities for smaller firms. Also, it probably would not be a good idea to hold up the Central Street work while the King Street project is still being engineered.

Mr. Nesbitt and Mr. Kiernan would like the Board's authorization tonight for the approval of the Engineering Services Contract as well as the loan application form. If this authorization comes tonight, they can move forward with scheduling the bond vote and preparing RFP documents should that vote be successful. Manager Fitzhugh asked if it were possible to hold the Central Street bond vote on the same day as the Annual Village Meeting (06/03/14). There already is Special Town Meeting vote by Australian Ballot that day to elect the new Utility Commissioners. Mr. Nesbitt felt that this was possible. Chair Donahue noted that the bond warning would need to be posted thirty (30) days in advance so the wording of the bond article would need to be generated as soon as possible.

Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to authorize Manager Fitzhugh to enter into an agreement with Phelps Engineering for engineering services on the water system improvements on Central Street and King Street and to authorize and sign the project loan documents.

Trustee Maxwell asked how much household water rates may rise to cover the costs of these projects. Ms. Baroffio stated that the current estimate is that the Central Street project would raise monthly water bills by \$3.29 per ERU (Equivalent Residential Unit) and the King Street project would raise monthly water bills by \$1.47 per ERU.

Trustee Beal asked if this would be a Town or Village vote. Ms. Baroffio stated that if the vote took place before the effective date of merger (07/01/14) it would be a Village vote and afterwards would be a Town vote. She recommended that the Board should contact attorney Paul Giuliani, who is an expert on all matters pertaining to bond votes, for his opinion on this matter. He may recommend postponing the vote until after municipal consolidation. Manager Fitzhugh noted that these decisions can be made after the documents presented tonight have been approved and signed.

Trustee Maxwell asked how the municipality would pay for these engineering services should the bond vote be unsuccessful. Ms. Baroffio said that this could be discussed during the upcoming Utility Budget process. There are waterline improvement CIP funds that could be used for this purpose. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **March 25, 2014 (Joint Board Meeting).** Motion by Trustee Maxwell, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-1 with Trustee Beal abstaining.**

V. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #20-14.** Motion by Trustee Wilson, seconded by Trustee Beal, to approve Warrant #20-14 in the amount of \$391,042.70. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VI. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **Proposed Sale of Former Police Station (52 East Street).** Manager Fitzhugh reported that the site walkthrough was held on Friday, April 4, 2014. Six (6) interested parties took part. Some follow-up questions were asked after the walkthrough and Manager Fitzhugh prepared a FAQ sheet to address them. This FAQ sheet is available on the municipal website. The bid opening will be held on Friday, April 25, 2014, at 3:00 p.m.
- b. **Village Common Rehabilitation Project.** Manager Fitzhugh stated that construction has begun and Project Manager Patrick DeMasi has been on site since the groundbreaking. The conduit for the telecommunications cable on the west side has been installed and the poles there are scheduled to come down early next week. The "bulb out" at the corner of Depot Square and North Main Street has been built and the work crew now is working westward installing curb and sidewalk. The handicapped ramp in front of Northfield Pharmacy is nearly complete. They seem to be making great progress. Trustee Maxwell asked if there have been any problems so far. Superintendent DeMasi had none to report. Manager Fitzhugh added that it has been noted that the curbing on the Village Common's interior (not a part of the current project) appears to have suffered considerable damage over the winter. He thought it might be a good idea to get estimates for this additional work from the contractor so that it also could be done this spring. Trustee Beal had no problem with obtaining cost estimates. Kathleen Lott asked when the project is supposed to be completed. Superintendent DeMasi said the estimated completion date is Friday, June 27, 2014. However, given the current pace of the construction crew, he would not be surprised if the work was finished much earlier.
- c. **LED Streetlight Replacement Project.** Manager Fitzhugh and Utility Officer Manager Doug Reed have been completing the final review of the material and labor RFP documents before they are sent out next week.
- d. **Town/Village Merger Transition.** Manager Fitzhugh and Town Manager Robert Lewis have been reviewing Town and Village ordinances to determine which should be reconciled or eliminated. This process has been suspended so that Manager Fitzhugh could work on the Utility budgets. Trustee Maxwell felt that this issue should be resolved by mid-May.
- e. **Manager Search Process.** Trustee Beal stated that at the committee meeting held last week (04/09/14), Abby Friedman (VLCT) provided an assessment of the forty-six (46) applications that had been received. Another meeting will be held tomorrow night (04/16/14) to create a short list for initial phone interviews. Trustee Maxwell asked how many phone interviews would be held. Trustee Beal stated that the committee would start with six (6) but add more if needed.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Acknowledgement of Receipt of 2013 Bridge Inspection Summary Reports.** Manager Fitzhugh stated that the Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) inspects all of Northfield's bridges over a two (2) year period and issues reports on those that have problems. In addition to the report is an acknowledgement of receipt form that the Village Trustees need to approve and sign. The current report specified two (2) problem bridges in Northfield with one in the Village (Main Street Bridge) and one in the Town (Sunny Brook Bridge). These bridges now are on a priority list so that the municipality can apply for AOT structure grants to repair them. Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Maxwell, to acknowledge receipt of the AOT bridge reports and sign the accompanying form. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. 2015 Budgeted Sale of 2005 International Dump Truck to Water/Sewer Department.** Manager Fitzhugh attended the Town Select Board meeting last night and he explained that there had been some confusion over this vehicle during the combined budget sessions. He had understood that the Town Highway Department uses this vehicle during the winter months and the Water/Sewer Department during the summer and had assumed that it was used the same amount by both departments. He subsequently learned that while the vehicle is used heavily in the winter, the Village only used it for about six (6) hours. Based upon this misunderstanding, the Village was believed to have committed to purchase the dump truck for \$34,000. However, once he explained this to the Town Selectmen last night, it was agreed that the vehicle would be advertised for sale to the general public. The Village has budgeted to purchase a new vehicle at a lower price.
- c. Out-of-Cycle Replacement of 2008 Mack Tandem Dump Truck.** Manager Fitzhugh reported that the Town Selectmen agreed last night to shift funds in the dump truck replacement CIP account in order to replace this vehicle that has had a number of problems over the past three (3) years. After some debate, the Town Select Board decided to authorize the purchase of a 2014 Western Star from Patriot Freightliner for a net amount of approximately \$195,096. (The price is inexact because the Town Selectmen decided to forego repainting the vehicle and savings were estimated at \$3000). Selectman Gadbois added that the purchase will include an extended warranty (seven years). Ms. Baroffio stated that money was shifted from the CIP account for replacing the 2005 Mack Tandem Dump Truck, which is in much better condition and expected to last for several more years. This can be done because voters authorized a dump truck replacement CIP account and there is no impediment to shifting funds between the 2005 Mack and 2008 Mack accounts. Ms. Baroffio stated that there now will be a shortfall in the 2005 Mack replacement account but this can be addressed over the next couple years during the budget process.
- d. Sidewalk Snow Removal Equipment Replacement.** Selectman Gadbois stated that after an executive session was held during which the Select Board discussed pricing options that the dealer preferred to keep confidential, the Town Selectmen decided to purchase a McLean MV-2. This was on the condition that the Village Trustees concur on this decision. Ms. Baroffio explained that it probably will be necessary to borrow \$44,000 to make up for the shortfall in the budget. Trustee Maxwell noted that Road Foreman Ramon Hudson provided a very informative presentation on the advantages of this machinery at the last Joint Board Meeting (03/25/14). Trustee Beal was not present at that meeting so he is reluctant to commit himself on this matter. Ms. Baroffio added that Mr. Hudson checked with other communities that have purchased a McLean MV-2 and they have been very impressed with its performance. Selectman Gadbois noted that the machine also can be used for summer mowing. Motion by Trustee Maxwell, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to authorize the purchase of a McLean MV-2 and to borrow the \$44,000 shortfall in the budget. **Motion passed 3-0-1, with Trustee Beal abstaining.**
- e. Municipal Building Leak Repairs.** Manager Fitzhugh stated that the recent snow melt caused some water to run into the building. This potential problem was worsened when the parking lot was paved last summer. Ms. Baroffio said that the area affected was the Accounting Office and particularly the room that houses the municipality's computer servers. She added that this was not the first time this has happened and the equipment purposely was raised above the floor in case of reoccurrence. A private contractor was brought in to address the damage and check for mold. The carpets were removed and the cement floor was scrubbed. Fortunately, no mold was found and the dampness only went a few inches up the wall. No Board action is needed until a decision is made on how to prevent future leaks. Manager Fitzhugh recommended that since there is money in the budget for building maintenance, a contractor should be brought in to make an evaluation.

- f. Utility Billing Software Enhancement.** As he previously reported, Manager Fitzhugh stated that the Public Service Board (PSB) has asked if the billing software that the Northfield Electric Department (NED) uses is capable of automatically calculating refunds should NED raise its electric rates in anticipation of a PSB rate increase request that is subsequently denied. The current MUNIS software cannot do this so the refund amounts would have to be worked out by hand. Mr. Reed looked into upgrading the MUNIS software and learned that it would cost \$22,000 to make this enhancement. By contrast, having the refunds calculated manually would cost about \$5,000. Manager Fitzhugh informed PSB of this but has not yet had a response. Trustee Beal felt that there probably is a software vendor that would have a better solution for less than \$22,000. Manager Fitzhugh added that the NED has never raised its electric rates in anticipation of PSB approval.
- g. Utilities Budget Meetings: April 15, 17, 22, and (if necessary) 24, 2014.** The meetings will be held at 7:00 p.m. and the first three (3) will be held in the Community Room. If a fourth meeting is necessary, it will be held in the Training Room at the Police Station.
- h. Joint Board Meeting: Monday, April 28, 2014.** The meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room.

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. Village Sweeper.** A resident complained to Trustee Beal that the Village Sweeper used to go by his house but not anymore. Trustee Beal would like to confirm which Village streets are swept on a regular basis. Manager Fitzhugh will check with Mr. Hudson.

IX. MANAGER'S REPORT.

- a. Annual Town and Village Audit RFPs.** Ms. Baroffio sent bid forms to eleven (11) accounting firms to perform audits of the Town and Village's financial statements. The RFP also will be advertised in this week's *Washington World*. The firm that has performed the audits in recent years will be precluded from bidding because it was felt that it would be a good idea to obtain a different perspective from another accounting firm. This is in no way a reflection on the performance of that accounting firm, which was considered to have done an excellent job.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT (Unscheduled)

- a. Matt Gadbois, Gadbois Laundromat.** Mr. Gadbois spoke to the Village Trustees last summer (07/23/13) about getting permission to pave the area around his laundromat; he would pay for the paving cost himself. He provided a photograph of the area to show where the paving would take place. Chair Donahue had no objection provided that the new paving does not go into the street. Trustee Maxwell is concerned about a tripping hazard if the new paving is not tapered at the ends. Ms. Gadbois has spoken to Mr. Hudson about this and will comply. Motion by Trustee Maxwell, seconded by Trustee Beal, to authorize Mr. Gadbois to pave on the municipal sidewalk in the vicinity of the Gadbois Laundromat. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

XI. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Wilson, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

These minutes were approved at the Village Trustees regular meeting of May 13, 2014.